

**Západočeská univerzita v Plzni**

**Fakulta pedagogická**

**Bakalářská práce**

**ŽIVOT A ODKAZ OLIVERA CROMWELLA**

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**Plzeň 2012**

**University of West Bohemia**

**Faculty of Education**

**Undergraduate Thesis**

**THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF OLIVER CROMWELL**

**Jan Korda**

**Plzeň 2012**

**Podklad pro zadání BAKALÁŘSKÉ práce studenta**

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**TÉMA ČESKY:**

Život a odkaz Olivera Cromwella

**NÁZEV ANGLICKY:**

The Life and Legacy of Oliver Cromwell

**VEDOUcí PRÁCE:**

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**ZÁSADY PRO VYPRACOVÁNÍ:**

1. Studium odborné literatury zaměřené na danou problematiku.
2. Studium dokumentů spojených s tématem práce.
3. Organizace použitelných zdrojů.
4. Písemné zpracování poznatků za použití odborné literatury.
5. Pravidelná a průběžná konzultace s vedoucím práce.

**SEZNAM DOPORUČENÉ LITERATURY:**

Coward, Barry (1980). The Stuart Age. Essex: Longman Group Limited.  
Coward, Barry (1991). Oliver Cromwell. Essex: Longman Group Limited.  
Gaunt, Peter (1996). Oliver Cromwell. Oxford: Blackwell Publisher Ltd.  
Morrill, John (2007). Oliver Cromwell. Oxford: Oxford University Press.  
Sherwood, Roy (1997). Oliver Cromwell: King In All But Name. Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing Limited.

**Podpis studenta:** .....**Datum:** .....**Podpis vedoucího práce:** .....**Datum:** .....

Prohlašuji, že jsem práci vypracoval/a samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury a zdrojů informací.

*V Plzni dne 25.června 2012*

.....  
Jan Korda

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express gratitude to my supervisor Mgr. Andrew Tollet, M.Litt. for his valuable advice and help.

## ABSTRACT

Korda, Jan. University of West Bohemia. June, 2012. The Life and Legacy of Oliver Cromwell.

Supervisor: Mgr. Andrew Tollet, M.Litt.

My thesis deals with the life and legacy of Oliver Cromwell, one of the most controversial figures in British and English history. The thesis itself is divided into two parts which are closely connected.

In the first part of my thesis I was trying to describe Cromwell's life and to pinpoint the most important events which shaped his personality and created his legacy. I focused especially on the Civil War which affected Cromwell's life and legacy the most. Insight into this problem is based on historical books by contemporary authors. The other part of the thesis explores perception of Cromwell at present. As a material for this research I used various articles and internet discussions.

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## INTRODUCTION

Oliver Cromwell, although obscure and unimportant for forty years of his life, became one of the most important and controversial figures in the history of the United Kingdom. A soldier who fought in the civil war to depose the King but also a man who seized power, dissolved Parliament and became absolutist ruler - those are both faces of Oliver Cromwell. Cromwell was for religious freedom for various sorts of Protestants but he strongly detested Catholics.

Oliver Cromwell was not only self-declared "Lord Protector" but also a godly man, dedicated puritan and excellent commander who played a key role in the Parliamentary victory in the civil war, King's execution and ultimately establishing of the Commonwealth. During the civil war Cromwell earned both respect and loyalty of the army which subsequently proved crucial to his seizure of power.

He was the only man who transformed England for the first and only time since the Norman invasion into something other than the monarchy. The thousand years of monarchy was interrupted for nine years, firstly by the republic "Commonwealth of England" under the reign of Rump Parliament which subsequently altered into the "Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland" also known as "The Protectorate", ruled by Oliver Cromwell himself. In spite of the fact that The Protectorate lasted only until Cromwell's death, it was a significant point of British history.

The primary goal of my thesis is to describe key events in Cromwell's life in order to provide insights into the controversy surrounding him because many conclusions are based on untrue or misinterpreted pieces of information which I would like to rebut. The secondary goal is to mention Cromwell's legacy which still cause controversy and divides opinion on Cromwell.

My thesis is divided into two main parts, both consisting of several chapters. The first part describes Cromwell's life and has three chapters, the first deals with his life until the civil war, the second and the most important chapter is about the civil war and the last chapter gives brief information about The Protectorate. The other part examines Cromwell's legacy, especially his reputation among Irish people but also certain posthumous honours.

I am aware of the fact that my thesis is pro-Cromwell but I used objective literature by impartial historians in the first part and comments of people prejudiced in favour of as well as against Cromwell in the second part in order to provide a complex picture of his personality with both virtues and vices and mention all important events of his life.



## Early life

Oliver Cromwell was born in Huntingdon, on the 25 April 1599 as the second son and one of the ten children of Robert Cromwell and Elizabeth Steward. But both Oliver's brothers died very young; therefore Oliver was raised as the only son within family of seven daughters.

There are several tales about Oliver's childhood, all of them highly likely invented after his death; nevertheless I would like to mention them. The first is that when young Prince Charles, (who was born a year later after Oliver) was with his father, King James I, were visiting Huntingdon, Oliver punched Charles in the nose and caused him to bleed. The other one is that as a child Oliver was saved by a clergyman from drowning but after many years he told Cromwell he wished he had held him under. The last tale is that Oliver played the king in a school play but he stumbled over his robe and dropped his crown on ascending the stage (Gaunt, 1996).

The first widely known member of Cromwell family was Cromwell's great-great-great-uncle Thomas Cromwell (1485 - 1540), who as minister of Henry VIII, although being executed, laid the foundations of future prosperity of the family. Cromwell's grandfather also had considerable wealth, especially due to marriage with the Lord Mayor's daughter. Cromwell's father was therefore born into the gentry class but as the youngest son he inherited only a house in Huntingdon. In September 1654 in his speech to the first parliament of the protectorate Cromwell said he "was by birth a gentleman, living neither in any considerable height, nor yet in obscurity" (Quotes about Oliver Cromwell, 2005).

Cromwell attended Huntingdon grammar school where the schoolmaster was Dr Thomas Beard who, in addition, was also a puritan pastor in local church. Tentative conclusion can be drawn that the basis for Cromwell's further beliefs could be found there, in the influence of Dr Beard. Contrary to it, John Morrill suggests that it is highly unlikely that Dr Beard and his book *Theatre of Judgement* shaped Cromwell's religious views or at least was a model for him. Further education was in Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, where Cromwell stayed only for one year until the death of his father in 1617 when Cromwell was eighteen. This college was lately known for its Puritan members; therefore we can presume that it could have certain influence on the young Cromwell. This theory is neither validated nor confuted.

Cromwell had to support the family and took care of his mother and sisters which presumably was not an easy task. On 22 August 1620, Cromwell, at the age of twenty one married Elizabeth Bouchier. It was undoubtedly a good move; because Elizabeth was the

eldest daughter of London fur trader Sir James Bouchier who had not only wealth and lands, but also connections with other wealthy families. During the marriage Elizabeth gave birth to nine children, five boys and four girls, from which three boys died at the age of twenty one or less but the rest enjoyed happy life. Cromwell also had a good time, "the subsidy rolls for the mid-1620s place him among the top twenty householders in the town" (Morrill, 2007, p. 4). There is certain evidence that in 1628 Cromwell suffered from ill health, especially depression. Cromwell was MP for Huntingdon in 1628 although the only record of his speech is criticism of Arminianism. In 1630 Cromwell was involved in changes in a power struggle in Huntingdon which inauspiciously resulted in his exclusion from the office which Cromwell endured badly causing himself further problems. Taken before the Privy Council he had to apologize which was a blow to his pride. After that, Cromwell sold his property and moved four miles away, into St Ives.

In St Ives his standards of life decreased significantly and "for the next five years he may have remained a gentleman by birth but he was a plain russet-coated yeoman by lifestyle" (Morrill, 2007, p. 6). The next change was in 1636 when Cromwell's uncle died and left him property in Ely as well as job as tithe collector. The tide had turned and Cromwell again had good times because "his tax return of 1641 suggests that, by then, he was one of the twenty wealthiest residents of Ely township" (Gaunt, 1996, p. 34). According to the letters from the late 1630s which contained intense religious expressions it seems that Cromwell went through a religious conversion and became a puritan. Presumable reason was a personal crisis strengthen by ill-health (Coward, 1991, p. 13).

Now with considerable wealth, Oliver became a member of both a Short and Long parliament for Cambridge and as a puritan he "stood out as a firm critic of royal policies not only in religious but also in secular affairs" (Gaunt, 1996, p. 39). During the Long parliament Oliver was a very important person, "he was appointed to a long list of committees ... Often acted as a teller ... Presented petitions" (Gaunt, 1996, p. 39). Sometimes with success but also sometimes without, but it was promising start of his political career.

Negotiations with the king did not go very well, forecasting inevitable events as in summer 1642 when the King ordered University's college plate to be taken to New Inn Hall to be melted down into "Oxford Crowns". To prevent that, Cromwell with small army left London and headed towards the Universities which was his first military action. If the civil war did not cease, Cromwell would face severe punishment, probably execution.

## **Civil War**

Cromwell and his colleagues did succeed in blocking the main roads and so preventing the bulk of the college plate from being sent to the King. He also seized for Parliament the arms and ammunition stored in Cambridge Castle. Cromwell was by no means the only parliamentary activist who, with or without clear authorization from the Long Parliament, had seen fit to use a measure of force during the summer of 1642, prior to the formal declaration of war by the King on 22 August, in order to secure men, money and materials and to resist royalist attempts to do likewise. (Gaunt, 1996, p. 41)

It is evident that Oliver acted fearlessly, decisively and with dedication. Contrary to his immediate participation in the war there is no evidence of Cromwell having former military experience. His "army" consisted of volunteers and could be described as a militia, although Cromwell was the very first person who acted against the king. Following month the flames of the First Civil War were kindled when Charles officially declared war at Nottingham and the war lasted until 1646.

1642 brought a number of indecisive battles which on both sides gave an opportunity for peace proposal. That was especially in the House of Lords, who persuaded the House of Commons. Although the king was determined to smash the parliament he accepted the negotiation which began at Oxford on 1 February 1643 but ended without any agreement.

Until mid-1643 Cromwell did not participate in any remarkable battle and only gained experiences and popularity in his small area. He devised a good defence strategy, established headquarters in Ely where he became governor and secured the area of East Anglia. It should be noted that war is not only matter of an army but also matter of supplies, especially money, and keeping certain points of strategic importance such as bridges and roads which was part of Cromwell's task. Cromwell was keenly aware that he need not only strong army, but also committed army, which is evident from his letters to Sir William Spring in September 1643: "I had rather have a plain russet-coated captain that knows what he fights for, and loves what he knows, than that which you call a gentleman and is nothing else" (Coward, 1991, p. 28) and "If you choose godly honest men to be captains of horse, honest men will follow them". Both were good opinions but in the future would cause Cromwell problems with parliamentary officials. Cromwell's first important battle was that at Winceby, where he successfully defeated the royalists and prevent them from invading into East Anglia and the East Midlands. In that battle Cromwell proved to be a brave man who not only commanded his soldiers from behind, but he also led the

charge and was almost killed when his horse was shot while riding. Nevertheless, all those battles of 1643 were rather skirmishes of only minor importance in the civil war.

In order to reorganize the parliament's army was in August 1643 created the Eastern Association uniting eastern counties under the leadership of Edward Montague. Cromwell was one of the many colonels, but he was promoted to commander of cavalry at the beginning of 1644. Cromwell soon realized how to lead his army. The key point was "two blocks of four cavalry troops apiece acted in unison, alternately standing and retiring, so holding off the royalist army and shielding their colleagues" (Gaunt, 1996, p. 48). It was an extraordinary approach, the main strength of cavalry and the way how it was used was crushing blow and then the pursuit of enemy units while Cromwell order them to stay on the battlefield. In this way a troop of horse was of greater importance than two or three groups of infantry. Cromwell was also a care leader, he minded supplies for his troops, not only food but also clothes and boots as well as giving them proper wages. This together with selecting good and godly men provided Cromwell with a loyal and disciplined army which would follow its commander until the death. On the other hand, Cromwell was again criticised for choosing men of low birth as officials, instead of those born as gentlemen. It is obvious that Cromwell was a man of no social prejudices and was committed to win the war against the king no matter how.

Choosing godly men was connected not only with Cromwell's desire for a dedicated army, but also directly with his religious beliefs. His letters and speeches were increasingly fulfilled with religious expressions, in most of them Cromwell thanked God for the victory and/or said it was God's will like in following examples: "Got hath given us, this evening, a glorious victory", "by God's providence they were immediately routed", "it is great evidence of God's favour", "the goodness of God" and much more (Gaunt, 1996, p. 51). In the process of time Cromwell thought himself and his army to be God's servants and almost every important event was the work of God. As will be seen further, during indecisive moments Cromwell waited for God's sign, what should he do. Of course when Cromwell did something wrong, e.g. lost a battle, it was again God's will and they had to seek what they did wrong and how to regain God's grace.

In 1644, after his promotion, Cromwell participated in battles of greater importance. Undoubtedly the most important battle in the first part of the civil war was for Cromwell the battle at Marston Moore. It was the first great and decisive victory. In this battle, Cromwell was again in charge but "received a nasty flesh wound in the neck early on and needed treatment, but he returned in time to take responsibility for the final, decisive

charge" (Morrill, 2007, p. 20). After the victory, Cromwell started to be called Old Ironside and his soldiers after him, the Ironsides. In addition, "first others, and then Cromwell himself, came to believe that he and the army had a divinely ordained mission to win the war and bring about godly reformation" (Coward, 1991, p. 24).

The alliance with the Scots was based on condition of establishing Scottish Presbyterianism in England when the war would be won. This was contrary to Cromwell's, and not only his, liberal religious beliefs. But on the other side were commanders biased in favour of strict Presbyterianism. At the beginning was a dispute with Major-General Crawford, followed by the clash with the Earl of Manchester. The clash took place even in the parliament where Cromwell accused Manchester of a dilatory approach towards the war. Manchester stroked back both defending himself and accusing Cromwell of prejudices against Scots and Presbyterianism and also of "deliberately undermining the established social and religious orders by promoting poor, common and mean men and by encouraging fanatics, sectaries and heretics" (Gaunt, 1996, p. 57). It is obvious that Cromwell was extraordinarily liberal, especially in the religious issue, which was nonetheless thorn in the side of many influential people in the army and in the parliament resulting in Cromwell's formal excuse. Cromwell realized that he had to focus more on the war events than on the politics. It became obvious that the army needed reformation to achieve as quick victory as possible. Current development came to a deadlock, although some major victories were won, the royalist army was not defeated yet.

As the progress of the war was not very well for the parliament, they discussed possibilities of improving. There would be a reformation of the army, conducted on the two levels. For the purpose of better military command Self-Denying Ordinance was discussed. The idea was that MPs should not be military commanders. This should lead into full commitment of the commanders who would not be disrupted by the political issues. Cromwell actively participated in the discussions at the beginning of 1645, but after two months left London and continued in the warfare, now under a new commander-in-chief Sir Thomas Fairfax. During his stay at London, he promoted the Self-Denying Ordinance as in his speech "no Members of either House will scruple to deny themselves, and their own private interests, for the public good" (Morrill, 2007, p. 24) and I have found no evidence that he thought of himself being excluded. Thanks to that ordinance Cromwell's problems with the Earl of Manchester were solved. The ordinance passed on 3 April, about a month after Cromwell's departure. It gave the commanders forty days to surrender their posts. The other aspect was reorganization of the army on the national basis

with a regular army, replacing former local basis of militias creating so called New Model Army. Soon after Cromwell was appointed Lieutenant-general of horse which meant he was second in command. By the time Cromwell's time as a commander was drawing to an end he was on the campaign and due to the threat of the king's army Cromwell gained forty days of extension which was further gradually prolonged until half of 1646. It is arguable, whether it was a real extension of functions, simply because during that campaign Cromwell appeared in the parliament only once and only for a week. On the contrary it has to be said that "no other MP was exempted from the self-denying ordinance to serve in the New Model Army, although two provincial commanders were given similar temporary extensions" (Morrill, 2007, p. 25).

In a summer of 1646 Cromwell fought many battles, e.g.: Dorset, Devon, Oxford, Langport, Somerset but probably the most important was that at Naseby in which large king's army was crushed. There are many evidences of Cromwell's not violent character. During sieges he frequently offered surrender on terms and many times gave a second chance to the defenders, after he bombarded the walls. One of these cases was Winchester Castle, which surrendered after its walls were broken, but "Cromwell pledged that no inhabitants of Winchester, soldiers or civilian, would suffer 'violence or injury' from his troops" (Gaunt, 1996, p. 64). Although that attitude was more often also examples of contradictory acting occurred, for instance at Basin House where many royalists were killed and the stronghold plundered. There is a possible explanation of that, otherwise extraordinary behaviour. The first reason could be that the Basin House had a bad reputation for raids and parliament wanted to dispose of it with exemplary punishment which in a case of such large stronghold was not easy. The second reason may be that it was a resort of Roman Catholicism which Cromwell hated with his whole heart. Probably it was intensified by Cromwell's beliefs of him acting according to God's will - and those beliefs were stronger and stronger with every won battle.

Cromwell's involvement in the first part of a civil war ended after four years in June 1646, after a surrender of Oxford and a king surrender to the Scots therefore demonstrating his unwillingness to settle the dispute with parliament. During those years Cromwell participated in numerous battles which transformed an unknown gentleman with a small army into respected and feared commander, the second most important man in the New Model Army. This seasoned veteran held both military and political power, during the campaign travelled through half of England.

In summer 1646 Cromwell again, after long four years, participated in the discussions of parliament. Much had changed, many MPs were replaced and the situation had to be solved. The majority in the parliament wanted settlement with the king, disbandment of most of the army and as was the condition, religious alteration to Scottish Presbyterianism. The army was of course totally disagreeing, especially since they were not properly paid. Cromwell's role thus was negotiator whose roles were to persuade parliament about the fallacy of their decision and the army not to revolt which surely was not an easy task and Cromwell suffered from disillusionment from the outcome of the war.

The king's strategy was simply to wait, to delay negotiations and generally to prolong the formal agreement which ultimately proved itself as a brilliant idea due to inner contradictions in the parliament. The conflict between Presbyterians who would accept the king with minimal conditions as well as Presbyterianism and Independents who mistrusted the king and demanded radical limitation of his power and refused Presbyterianism. Oliver Cromwell was definitely on the side of Independents and so were most of the army.

The negotiations developed badly for the army which consequently captured the king and took him from Holmby House to Newmarket. There is no clear evidence proving Cromwell's direct involvement, he personally denied it, nevertheless historians admit it was on his order. It was on 2 June and three days later army announced their refusal of disbandment called A Solemn Engagement. That was followed by A Representation of the Army, under which was also Cromwell signed, it was a declaration of army's demands: "a purge of the present parliament; future parliament of fixed duration; guaranteed right of the people to petition parliament; liberty of tender consciences" (Coward, 1980, p. 197). On 7 June 1647 Cromwell spoke with the king for the first time and was the main speaker, pushing forward bills, e.g. about religious toleration towards all but Catholics. Later that year Cromwell was negotiating with the king again, but also with the parliament. There is one Cromwell's speech in parliament in which he claimed "it was necessary to re-establish him [the king] as quickly as possible" (Gaunt, 1996, p. 64). The negotiation with the king was fruitless and Cromwell started to gradually change his opinion on how Charles should be treated. Reestablishing of Charles as the king was out of the question but so was his execution. Cromwell and Fairfax had to calm down the army which was also divided whether to continue negotiations or not. All those problems were solved when the king escaped on 11 November. There are some theories that Cromwell engineered that escape, but those are again unproved. Charles desperately needed any ally therefore he promised to establish Scottish Presbyterianism for three years in exchange for Scottish military support

which started the second part of the civil war. It is evident that the religious issue was of the same importance as the political issue since Scots firstly fought against the king with the parliament promise of establishing Presbyterianism but when that did not happen they switched sides and fought with the king under the same condition as previously. The fact that Charles was absolutely untrustworthy and he would not cooperate with the parliament was to Cromwell very beneficial. The army was united again, and those who demanded strict restriction of the king's power were in the right. As Cromwell said "we declared our intentions for monarchy ... Unless necessity enforces an alternation" (Morrill, 2007, p. 41). Cromwell himself thought of establishing the king's youngest son Henry, who was in the army's custody, which would both preserve the monarchy and replace the king.

The second civil war started for Cromwell with an anti-rebel campaign in South Wales. After six weeks of siege he successfully captured Pembroke castle and headed north to intercept the Scottish invasion. In August Cromwell defeated the royalists at Preston which was a decisive victory under his full-command. The second part of the civil war was swift but the outcome was again indecisive. Cromwell learned his lesson was definitely against restoration of the king, he demanded that "the capital and grand author of our troubles, the person of the king ... May be speedily brought to justice for treason, blood and mischief he is guilty of" (Morrill, 2007, p. 46). But the parliament was still divided whether to negotiate with the king or not which resulted in Pride's Purge on 6 December during which was removal of Long Parliament in order to remove MPs who were in favour of further negotiation with the king hereby creating the Rump Parliament.

Despite his situation, Charles was still very self-confident. After two lost civil wars he still thought he was almighty. He refused abdication therefore the trial was inevitable. Cromwell attended all but one session of the trial and was the third who signed Charles' death warrant commenting this event as "cruel necessity". Charles I was executed on 30 January 1649 despite the fact that it was decision of small group not the vast majority of the population. In 1651 Cromwell himself stated that "I am neither heir nor executor to Charles Stuart" (Quotes of Oliver Cromwell, 2005). At the trial Charles was accused of being "tyrant, traitor and murderer; and a public and implacable enemy to the Commonwealth of England" (Kreis, 2009) and sentenced:

For all which treasons and crimes this Court doth adjudge that he, the said Charles Stuart, as a tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of this nation, shall be put to death by the severing of his head from his body". (Kreis, 2009)



Hereby monarchy as well as the House of Lords was abolished and instead the republic established and Cromwell was now the most powerful person in England. Despite the fact that Fairfax was still the head of the army and Cromwell only the second one and also that during the war Fairfax was given much more attention from the press therefore was better known than Cromwell but recent development put Fairfax aside. Barry Coward outlines a reason why Cromwell was so popular - it could be said he was acceptable for both those who wanted revolution and those who were conservative.

But all that did not bring the desired outcome, there was no such religious freedom as puritans desired neither the future of the state without the king and half of the parliament was secure irrespective the new council of state and other state offices. Also it cannot be said that everybody agreed with that outcome. Very soon Cromwell and Fairfax had to crush several uprisings. Coward (1980) comments about the revolution: "What was done was not as wide-ranging as the Russian Revolution or as permanent as the French Revolution, but if there ever has been an English Revolution it surely took place from December 1648 to January 1649" (p. 201/202).

It was proved very soon as the Irish revolted starting the third part of civil war. Due to his broad military experience and personal interest Cromwell was chosen to lead the Irish campaign. Cromwell was interested in the war with Irish already in 1641 onward; he gave financial support several times and actively participated in the committee for Irish affairs. Cromwell also wanted to lead the Irish campaign in 1647 but was not appointed. Probably the main reason for that significant interest was Cromwell's religious belief, since the majority of the Irish were Catholics. From the following quotation it is obvious how strongly Cromwell hated them:

I had rather be over-run with a Cavalerish interest than a Scotch interest; I had rather be over-run with a Scotch interest than an Irish interest; and I think of all, this is the most dangerous; and if they shall be able to carry on this work they will make this the most miserable people in the earth. For all the world knows their barbarism". (Gaunt, 1996, p. 113)

It is clear that even after the king's execution Cromwell was still more soldier and Puritan than a politician. During the two years of the campaign he did not attempt to strongly influence political issues. In Ireland Cromwell had three main objectives - the first was to eliminate support for Charles II represented by union of Charles I supporters with Irish Catholics, the second was to confiscate land of opponents from 1641 and the third was to establish English laws. The Irish campaign was different not only because of

religious hostility but also due to difficult terrain and harsh climate. During the whole campaign Cromwell lost more men due to illnesses than the enemy. The other feature of that campaign was the Irish unwillingness to fight with Cromwell; there are no significant field battles, only sieges of town and castles.

On 15 August Cromwell arrived in Dublin and after two weeks his army moved. The first target was stronghold Drogheda, place of English Catholics. The defenders of Drogheda had the advantage of hill position and formidable fortification. As ever Cromwell offered surrender:

Having brought the army belonging to the Parliament of England before this place, to reduce it to obedience, to the end the effusion of blood may be prevented; I thought it fit to summon you to deliver the same into my hands to their use. If this be refused you will have no cause to blame me. (Liberty Ireland, n.d.)

but the town refused. Ensuing bombardment breached the wall but the first assault was repulsed although the Cromwell's army was approximately four times larger. The second assault was led by Cromwell in person and penetrated the defence. However, strong resistance continued in the city. Finally overwhelmed, the defenders lost approximately 2,800 out of 3,100 soldiers and also several hundred inhabitants were killed with 300 of them executed after the surrender. Cromwell gave a direct order of no mercy "our men getting up to them, were ordered by me to put them all to the sword. And indeed, being in the heat of action, I forbade them to spare any that were in arms" ('The righteous judgement of God': Cromwell). In his letters could be found an explanation, why this atrocity was committed. Cromwell, he took it as revenge for murders of English settlers in Ireland - "I am persuaded that this is a righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches, who imbrued their hands in so much innocent blood". But Drogheda had never been an important base of the Irish revolution and many of them were either English or those who fought against the rebels. The other reason was that Cromwell hoped it would serve as deterrent example and would force other towns to surrender immediately with less bloodshed (Gaunt, 1996, p. 116; Cromwell Devastates Ireland, n.d.).

Another similar massacre was in Wexford on 11 October. But in this case, Cromwell's guilt is not indisputable because "as the assault began the defenders sank a hulk in the harbour, drowning 150 protestant prisoners-of-war, and that Cromwellians found the bodies of more prisoners starved to death in a locked chapel" (Morrill, 2007, p. 61). There is evidence of neither Cromwell's order to spare no one nor him trying to prevent the massacre of about 2,000 people, civilians including, 300 of which drowned when trying to

escape in overloaded boats. According to Cromwell's later letters could be said that as Drogheda was intentional, so Wexford was unexpected. "Otherwise his intolerance and bigotry on his Irish campaign stands out starkly from his record of tolerance of the opinions of others in England and in Scotland" (Coward, 1980, p. 215).

Although the Irish campaign was not terminated, Cromwell had to leave and face another threat. Nine months in Ireland were enough to suppress the Irish resistance, but insufficient to conquer the whole island. Guerrilla warfare continued for several following years.

In June 1650 Charles II arrived in Scotland and began his negotiation with Presbyterians. Since the Scots proclaimed Charles II the king and promised him military support this new threat had to be eliminated. Fairfax resigned on his post therefore Cromwell was for the first time Lord General of the army. The Scottish campaign had one thing in common with the Irish campaign - in both the enemy was merely defending and tried to avoid field battles. Thus Cromwell swiftly occupied some strongholds, but did not have army strong enough to capture them. Not battles but desertion and disease reduced Cromwell's army from 16,000 to 11,000 within a month. It was at the Dunbar where the Scots had army two times larger. Scottish, under the command of Leslie, were expecting nothing but some desperate charge, but Cromwell surprised everybody with his brilliant plan. He attacked with the whole army before the dawn, aiming on the Scottish right wing which was unable to resist wave after wave of attacks. The centre was now exposed and defeated and ultimately even the left wing was destroyed. No doubt it was the greatest victory of the whole civil war and the best example of Cromwell's brilliant military thinking.

He claimed that 3,000 Scots were killed and 10,000 were captured. Before the battle it was said that Cromwell was so tense that he bit his lips until blood covered his chin. He began the battle by emitting a great shout: 'let God arise and his enemies shall be scattered' (Psalm 51). After the battle he laughed uncontrollably". (Morrill, 2007, p. 65)

Cromwell desired a swift end to the campaign and in best case by diplomacy not by battles. It was probably due to weak army unable to storm the castles, in addition Cromwell suffered from recurrent fever and dysentery. The illness was long and serious, Cromwell thought he might die but, as he wrote in the letters, merciful God did not let him. In July 1641 Cromwell's health was good again and so were the numbers of his army; thus nothing impeded the campaign from continuing. The final battle was fought at Worcester

where even "king" Charles II was present. Here Cromwell again fought against Leslie; one year after Dunbar. Unlike then, this time Cromwell's army outnumbered Leslie's with about the same ratio. Cromwell had about 30,000 men while Leslie something from 12,000 to 16,000. Not surprisingly the Scots were defeated, some killed, about half taken as prisoners and the rest, Charles included, escaped. For Cromwell it was the end of the Scottish campaign as well as the end of his military command. Although he remained Lord General for the rest of life, he did not lead an army in any further battles. "Leaving others to mop up in Scotland, Cromwell returned to London on 12 September to be formally received in a triumph that echoed those of Roman generals, even Roman emperors" (Morrill, 2007, p. 67).

Cromwell's military career was now over; therefore he could fully occupy himself with the policy. Cromwell as a politician had four main objectives. The first was new elections, thus Cromwell wanted the Rump to set a date of its dissolution. The second was reconciliation with former royalists, the third was union of England, Scotland and Ireland and the last aim was religious reformation. As for the union of the kingdoms, Cromwell's impact on events in Ireland is unknown; more likely Henry Ireton, Lord Deputy in Ireland was responsible. Nevertheless, the Act of Settlement passed and subsequently more than 100,000 Irish Catholics were sentenced to death.

The Rump was completely unable to perform the desired changes. Cromwell was gradually losing his patience but the army's patience was over in August 1652 when the officers demanded dissolution. Cromwell did his best to postpone this act, but the Rump acted no better; thus on 20 April 1653 Cromwell accompanied by about forty musketeers entered their session and dissolved the Rump. It could be seen as an act in a want of absolute power, but considering the fact that during his Protectorate another parliament was called, it is rather unlikely. Cromwell had to choose his side, there was no other option, and he chose the army, not the parliament.

## **The Protectorate**

Contrary to the presupposition, neither military dictatorship, nor new election occurred. The Rump was replaced by Barebones parliament (also called Nominated Assembly, Little Parliament, Parliament of Saints), assembled on 4 July 1653, consisting of 138 men. As Cromwell told them, they were chosen by God, to rule for God. But Cromwell himself did not engage significantly. Barebones parliament was utter failure; same as the Rump they did not accomplish all the needed reforms. And from those successfully accomplished many were very radical or simply poor. Morrill (2007) notes that the Assembly at the beginning was not considered a real parliament, only a device to prepare, within eighteen months, a basis for further government but subsequently they declared themselves a parliament and commence their disputes. It became obvious that Cromwell's main objective of godly reformation and religious freedom would not be fulfilled; therefore the Barebones parliament concluded itself on 12 December. Cromwell's experiment failed but for him it meant an open way to become a head of state.

Without any prolongation on 16 December 1653 Oliver Cromwell was declared "Lord Protector 'the chief magistracy and the administration of the government [the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland and of the dominions thereunto belonging] and the people thereof" (Morrill, 2007, p. 83). On 4 September 1654 met the first parliament and began preparing the first written constitution. The Instrument of Government was designed to separate executive power possessed by the Protector with the legislative power in the hands of parliament in order to prevent any abuse and to bring the balance of forces. The constitution was rather conservative and promising to restore stability.

Cromwell became head of state, but not the king. He was entitled Lord Protector, but in a different way. "Historically it had been given to those acting as regents during the minority, absence or incapacity of the sovereign. Once the existence had passed the Protectorate was expected to give way to monarchical rule" (Sherwood, 1997, p. 2). But Cromwell was head of the republic not a kingdom, thus it was expected he would not pass the power to somebody else. For the time being Cromwell was appointed until death and neither dismissal nor resignation was mentioned. The investiture was held in Westminster Hall where also the trial of Charles I took place. Albeit it was a formal event of high importance, the ceremony itself was not as magnificent as one could think: Cromwell was dressed only in a plain black suit and the celebration was far less sumptuous than that of his re-inauguration four years later.

Liberty in religious beliefs was achieved through the Directory of Worship which replaced the Book of Common Prayer. People were given a guide not prescription and Protestant sects were tolerated until they violated the law. The other remarkable example of religious freedom was readmission of Jews who were expelled by Edward I in 1290.

Nevertheless, the parliament did not fulfil Cromwell's expectations and together with disputes over the power and leading of the army led to its dissolution on 22 January 1655, after only five months, which was the minimal duration of the parliament.

The other problems Cromwell had to solve were royalist risings and army expenditure. A solution for both problems was the division of the country and establishing major-generals, governors and leaders of the local volunteer militia paid from the additional taxes imposed on royalists. It may appear as a good solution but it met with opposition and people protested against military rule and centralization.

The foreign policy of the Protectorate began with peace with Dutch in April 1654. It was important not only because of reducing costs but also because Dutch would not be allies of Charles II if he invaded England. The other peaceful desire was an alliance with protestant France. To the contrary, Cromwell wanted war with Spain, declaring that “your greatest enemy is Spaniard. He is. He is natural enemy, he is naturally so” (Morrill, 2077, 98). Due to firm rule in Ireland and Scotland the state was secure. Sharply contrasted to his former acts in Ireland is his decision “to send his younger son, the assured and pragmatic Henry Cromwell, to bring an end to the plan to herd all the Catholics into the west of Ireland and to soften the policies against Catholic religion” (Morill, 2007, p 99). On the other hand, an attempt to attack the Spanish colonies in West Indies was an utter failure and capturing Jamaica was no compensation. Nevertheless, money needed for the war were given by the second parliament summoned on 17 September 1656. Their product was Humble Petition and Advice which restored bicameral parliament and gave Cromwell possibility of naming his successor. It became evident that the republic was shifting backwards to monarchy. The only difference was still in the title; Cromwell accepted the constitution but rejected the title king. Probably the most important reason laid in the support of the army in whose favour Cromwell made many decisions and accepting the crown could alienate the army. In addition, Cromwell in his letters mentioned that “God has blasted the title and the name” (Morrill, 2007, p. 104) which is evidence of his strong faith even at the later part of his life.

As a protector Cromwell resided in Hampton Court and Whitehall Palace where he met with foreign ambassadors and MPs or army officials. Not only were there similarities

with the king in power possessed but also almost everything was as it used to be during the reign of kings. Cromwell was called "his Highness" and signed as "Oliver P" which meant "Oliver Protector", the style used by monarchs (Sherwood, 1997).

The bicameral parliament met in January 1658 but due to inner power struggles between the houses Cromwell had to dissolve it.

Cromwell peacefully died on 3 September 1658, an anniversary of the battles of Dunbar and Worcester. There is certain theory that he was poisoned by his physician Dr Bate, who was also physician to Charles I and Charles II yet this wild theory is not validated by the historians. He suffered from malarial fever which caused pneumonia causing Cromwell's death. His health was also weakened by the death of his daughter Elizabeth.

His successor was his son Richard Cromwell. Although Richard's reign was inherited legally, he was unable to win the favour of the army thus he reigned only for eight months. Richard did not have the loyalty of the army which was the strongest support of his father's power.

The perception of the Protectorate as it was Cromwell's personal dictatorship is inappropriate. Morrill (2007) claims that Cromwell's role is exaggerated and he was not as important as is generally considered to be: "In fact, he was often embattled and overborne by his councillors, by his parliaments, and perhaps by his army colleagues". It is obvious that Cromwell was rather arm of the revolution than the brain and it did not alter during the Protectorate during which his power originated from the support of the army than from the support of parliament.

Convention Parliament met on April 1660 and proposed to restore Charles II which was accepted by the majority. Although with certain limits in power, the monarchy was restored.

With the restoration came Cromwell's posthumous humiliation – he, as well as other signatories of king's death warrant, "should be exhumed and their bodies desecrated on the twelfth anniversary of the regicide, 30 January 1661" (Morrill, 2007, p. 107). Subsequently, Cromwell's head impaled on a spike was placed at Westminster Hall for nearly twenty years. Cromwell's body was removed from the grave 4 days before the posthumous execution which provided enough time to substitute his body with another one yet this theory is not validated.

## Legacy

Without any doubt, Oliver Cromwell is a very controversial person and so is his legacy. It is very arguable, because objectively there are events according to which one must consider Cromwell as both hero and villain. In this chapter I would try to trace a development of Cromwell's legacy which started after his death which was spectacularly mourned and altered with the fall of the Protectorate and restoration of Stuart monarchy which depicted him as a tyrant.

Nevertheless, “more than 160 full-length biographies have appeared, and more than 1000 separate publications bear his name” (Morrill, 2007, p. 108). Immediately after his death some positive biographies were written and after the restoration some negative articles were written but Cromwell's legacy gradually faded. The turnabout occurred at the end of the 17th century when Britain participated in Nine Year's War revived Cromwell's military success. The most important work which made Cromwell publicly known were *Letters and Speeches of Oliver Cromwell* by Thomas Carlyle, published in 1845. Those were in print for exactly 100 years with more than 100,000 copies sold. The book itself “is a passionate defence of Cromwell's sincerity, of his faith in God, in his living out his vocation and his mission” (Morrill, 2007, p. 111).

The key thing is difference of present society from that of Cromwell. The majority of people no longer fear God, the church has far less power and slavery is prohibited thus Cromwell's deeds cannot be justified according to contemporary moral and values but in the context of 17<sup>th</sup> century England.

It is very difficult to portray Cromwell as either villain or hero, he has features of both. Firstly, BBC Top 100 Britons of all time shows how popular Cromwell is nowadays. Secondly, I would explore viewpoints from internet discussions both those which cannot be described as credible sources, but express views of common people and also of discussions of people deep knowledge of the topic. Then I would focus especially on Irish where he is hated more than anywhere else and lastly I would give examples of some Cromwell honours.

I have found many opinions, however many of them seemed to be good but after I have read some objective books I have to say that the considerable part of them is at least partly wrong, exaggerated or even totally misunderstood. I have also observed that arguments in favour of Cromwell are on a higher level and with a better basis than those biased against him. As the saying goes, history is written by the winners, thus Cromwell is mainly viewed as a villain and there are two main reasons for it: Drogheda and regicidal.



The case of Drogheda I have described in the chapter about civil war and from what I have mention is obvious that the situation in Ireland was different from that in England, especially in religion and for Cromwell it was very important. There is a piece of evidence in the defence of Cromwell, that he offered Drogheda surrender and warned them. In that time Cromwell was well known for winning numerous battles, therefore it was their imprudent decision to fight against him. The other important fact is that Cromwell spent only about one year in Ireland, but the revolution lasted for the three following years and during the Commonwealth Cromwell did not have absolute power and many laws were passed by the parliament; thus blaming Cromwell is misleading.

The other question is the regicide. Some praise Cromwell as the father of democracy; some dispraise him for decapitating the king. No one of those people complaining about the execution of Charles I gives any reason why this was wrong. The only argument is that they should only imprison the king that was exactly what the parliamentarians did; the execution was performed after unsuccessful negotiation with the king who escaped from the imprisonment. The argument that he dissolved the parliament is baseless; he was not the only ruler who did it and neither Charles I nor James I are hated for dissolving the parliament.

There is indisputable evidence of Cromwell's popularity in Great Britain. In 2002 the BBC conducted a poll "100 Greatest Britons of all time" where 1,622,248 people responded; thus it could be regarded as a relatively objective result. Oliver Cromwell became the 10<sup>th</sup> greatest Briton of all time with about 45,000 votes (Victory for Churchill as he wins the battle of the Britons, 2002). It can be argued that he might as well appear on a list of the most hated Britons, but there is no such a list (serious list with enough responses) including persons already dead. The reasons why he achieved that good position are arguable; there can be many people who appreciate what he did in politics, for religious freedom or there is also the possibility the was given votes by people who hate the Irish. Nevertheless, the only monarch who was placed better than Cromwell was Queen Elizabeth I in the 7<sup>th</sup> position with almost 72,000 votes which means that Cromwell is more popular than any British king ever. According to the result in BBC popularity of the monarchy in general can be questioned.

On Yahoo Answers there is a discussion on why Cromwell achieved such a good position but that discussion turned mostly into Irish expressions of hate towards Cromwell. One contributor argues that the Irish were not involved in that survey which I can neither prove nor disprove but there were three Irish on the list, one of them Irish nationalist James

Connolly, who achieved 64<sup>th</sup> position (100 Greatest Britons, 2009). The other contributor states about Cromwell: “He was a murderous psychopath who severely persecuted Catholics especially in Ireland. In my opinion he's on par with Hitler for his cruelty. How can people like this murderer” to which the author adds a brief description of Drogheda massacre. In this and also other discussions on Yahoo Answers, Cromwell is said to be most hated man in Ireland and often compared to Hitler. Here are some examples: “I'm Irish. Here (U.S.) since before the Revolutionary War. We STILL hate him”, “Oliver Cromwell is still the most hated man in Irish history”, “It depends on where you are from, if you're Irish hes up there with Hitler” (Why was Oliver Cromwell voted number 10, 2011; Oliver Cromwell, 2008).

The last idea expresses that opinions depend on the country of the speaker. I have to agree because I have found numerous examples how Irish hate him and also articles about it, but the occurrence of these hate speeches is more numerous from the Irish than from the English. I have encountered several Irish websites containing anti-Cromwell articles. The reason is the same as mentioned previously – the Drogheda massacre. In addition, on IrishAbroad.com, their “social networking worldwide” the idea has a greater extent – from Cromwell’s responsibility of the massacre to division of Irish and English, as is seen in following quotation:

To this day, the figure of Oliver Cromwell divides Irish and English people. In Britain he continues to be regarded as a brilliant, reforming politician who consolidated the power of parliament. The Irish, meanwhile, find it odd that English academics can set aside Cromwell's slaughter of civilians and other acts when assessing his character”.  
(Olivier Cromwell - The most hated man in Irish history, 2009)

I have to oppose the idea that “Cromwell's slaughter of civilians and other acts” are set aside by English academics. In neither book I have read about Cromwell was this omitted. All historians whose books I have read deal with Cromwell without any emotions, which is necessary in writing professional literature and gives the reader an unbiased view. Nevertheless, opinions about Oliver Cromwell are sometimes rather contradictory. The evidence suggests that Cromwell is generally hated in Ireland, but it is not obvious that he is unanimously regarded as a hero in England. In these discussions it seems like Cromwell came to Drogheda with an army and slaughtered the whole town on purpose but no one mentions the beginning of the event. Cromwell besieged the town and gave them opportunity to surrender before his army breached into the town. It does not justify his following act but suggests a possibility that the inhabitants of Drogheda could have

avoided the massacre. Hate speeches on Cromwell appear not only on discussion forums and personal web pages, but also on commercial pages, such as VisitIreland.com which could be described as some sort of tourist guide/help but there are also briefly described events from history of Ireland and Oliver Cromwell is not missing. The following excerpt again omits a general background of the whole conquest of Ireland as well as a precise description of certain events:

Oliver Cromwell was a snake and gave no one his mercy. He and his troops enthusiastically slaughtered the Irish people and destroyed everything in their path. He would rather kill the Irish than even lay eyes on them - and he did. He and his troops ravaged and devastated the land. Defenceless people (men, women and children) were murdered by the scores with absolutely no regard whatsoever. Basically, if you were in his path you were a goner. In one of his most callous acts he burned hundreds of people alive. Hearing that Cromwell was advancing to their area the people in reign around the Rock of Cashel flocked there for refuge. When Cromwell arrived they went into the church in the hope of being spared. Instead Cromwell ordered his men to barricade them inside. They then piled turf all around the church and set it ablaze. If you travel to Ireland you will see many ruins. You can thank Cromwell and his troops for many of them. (Irish History – Oliver Cromwell, n.d.)

As for Cromwell's defence, there are numerous examples of Irish towns which surrendered without a fight which means without killing and destroying. Drogheda was the only intentional massacre Cromwell committed in Ireland, and, in addition, considerable parts of its inhabitants were English. I have mentioned that Cromwell left Ireland in 1650, although the war not yet ceased. From then on, Henry Ireton was the dominant person there and also the man responsible for other massacres, such as this one:

In the south Ireton besieged Limerick for two months. He brought in heavy guns by sea, including mortars firing exploding shells. A battery of 28 guns pounded the city for days. When citizens attempted to leave, Ireton had them hanged, including one little girl. On 27th October the city surrendered. Apart from nearly a thousand men of the garrison killed in the fighting, Ireton reckoned that about 5000 persons had perished 'by the sword without and the famine and plague within'. Galway was the last city to submit, in May 1652. (The curse of Cromwell, n.d.)

It is obvious that with Cromwell back in England, troubles in Ireland continued, but one can blame Cromwell only for what he really did and not for the crimes of others. He is obviously responsible for creating certain conditions which probably were used to

legitimate the actions of others, yet Cromwell's intention is unclear. Nevertheless, even 350 years later, "Many today trace the current problems in Northern Ireland back to Cromwell. The British troops in Northern Ireland are referred to as "Cromwell's Boys," and there is hardly a ruined building in Ireland whose destruction is not blamed on Cromwell" which is strong evidence of how deep-rooted is Cromwell's legacy in Ireland (Cromwell Devastates Ireland, n.d.).

The influence of Cromwell on Ireland is still being discussed, e.g. at the fifth annual symposium of the Old Drogheda Society on 12 September 1999 where a number of invited lecturers explored this theme. I would pinpoint two ideas presented at this symposium, which cast new light on the event.

The first idea is by Tom Reilly from Old Drogheda Society. He is the author of a book *Cromwell: An Honourable Enemy* and amateur historian. Reilly

portrayed Cromwell as a 'decent human being' and proposed that he should not be judged for war crimes against the Irish people because he followed the strict protocols of seventeenth-century siege warfare honourably. He declared that Cromwell had a 'profound religious experience' which greatly influenced his military behaviour during his campaigns and was greatly affected by the Irish massacre stories of 1641. He asserted that from his own interpretation of contemporary primary sources there was no massacre of civilians in Drogheda but a discriminate policy of butchering Royalist combatants. At Wexford, Reilly accepted that the slaughter got out of control when Parliamentary troops entered the town after the hand-over of Wexford Castle. He stated that he had no particular political axe to grind but blamed Cromwell's bad press on modern day partisan nationalist elements. (*The Curse of Cromwell*, 2009)

This statement expresses the very often omitted fact that Drogheda was more English than Irish; therefore the Cromwellian massacre was not an act against the Irish as a nation but an act against civil war enemy. It is sharply contrasted with Cromwell's own viewpoint because he personally thought it as a revenge upon Irish for the former cruelties. The event can be seen from two contradictory points of view. Either as cruel revenge upon Irish as Cromwell had it in mind, or as a massacre of Royalist as it actually happened. Undoubtedly, Drogheda was a massacre and it was the worst act during the whole civil war, yet there are two possible explanations of it. Reilly's theory is revolutionary because he absolutely rejects civilian casualties by the claim "Oliver Cromwell is completely innocent of killing the ordinary unarmed people of Ireland and I defy anyone to prove otherwise" (*Cromwell not guilty as charged*, 2008). The main evidence for this theory are

archaeological discoveries, or more precisely the lack of them. Reilly states that there is no archaeological evidence of massacre of 3,500 people from which 500 to 700 were civilians. From his point of view it was misinterpreted due to Catholic and royalist propaganda. Generally the book was well received, but historians strongly object to it, considering it unreliable, mostly because it was written “without consulting a single book or pamphlet dating from the time of the sack of Drogheda. Instead, he bases his thesis on extracts of contemporary sources reproduced, with varying degrees of accuracy, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries” (Vallance, 2008). Reilly ignores certain evidences, especially Cromwell’s own letters and also “dismisses all accounts of the massacre which were not written by eyewitnesses” (Vallance, 2008), which means he rejects almost everything written by established historians such as Peter Gaunt, John Morrill, Michael Burke or Antonia Fraser.

The other idea I would like to mention is from Jim McElligot of St Anne’s, Oxford who states that

There was no strong hostility to Cromwell among literate Irish Catholics until the middle of the nineteenth century. Gaelic nationalists as part of the new Irish historical imagination, which continued as orthodox history well into the twentieth century, had demonised Cromwell. The new Irish State after 1922 inherited and cultivated a cult of violence in Irish history, which praised nationalist violence as inherently ‘good’ and British violence as inherently ‘bad’. These myths were perpetuated in the primary and secondary school approved history textbooks up to recent times. Jim McElliot cautions against minimising the carnage and slaughter inflicted upon Irish towns during the Cromwellian campaign and pointed out that although revisionist historians prompted a reassessment of nearly every aspect of Irish history they never attempted to alter the Cromwell’s reputation in Ireland. He concludes by stating that it was now time to move beyond revisionism versus revivalism and take the opportunity presented to reassess Ireland’s past. (The Curse of Cromwell, 2009)

This demonstrates interesting development of attitude towards Cromwell with increase of anti-Cromwell feelings 200 years after his death. At that time Cromwell’s acts in Ireland were used to strengthen the national spirit, to evoke hatred towards England.

Another discussion about Cromwell is following the Daily Mail article called “Was Oliver Cromwell - founder of the British Empire - the greatest ever Englishman?” from 1 January 2011. The article is clearly pro-Cromwell, author mentions all the important events and from following quotation is obvious how he admires Cromwell:

Rivalled only by William Gladstone, the great Victorian reformer who led Britain at the zenith of its power, and Winston Churchill, the indomitable lion who led us to victory over the Nazis, Cromwell stands at the top of our historical pantheon, as the man who laid the foundations for our greatness (Sandbrook, 2011).

The article is accompanied by a discussion which is again pro-Cromwell, with opinions against him rated as unpopular. I would mention some examples of both sides.

“Yes. Cromwell was the greatest ever. Churchill second, I think. God only knows - we need another like him today to sweep away the milksops and thieves in power and run the country as most Englishmen want it to be run”

“The greatest Englishman an utterly stupid statement if there ever was one. The man was a fanatical maniac. Responsible for many innocent deaths, and the destruction of more beautiful buildings in England than virtually any other of his time. He ordered, amongst many other dreadful acts, the destruction of the stained glass windows in Carlisle Cathedral, which have the honour of being the tallest in England, only thwarted when his soldiers couldn't get ladders long enough in Carlisle to destroy the top portions, due to the sensible and brave citizens of the city hiding them successfully. He also used the Cathedral to stable his horses and men in, and prisoners before execution too, many of them carved their names into the choir stalls before death. I won't list his atrocities in Ireland here, as there isn't room enough, suffice to say, many innocent people were put to death on his orders. So, the greatest Englishman? No, without a doubt, one of our biggest embarrassments”

“He achieved his position as "protector" by defeating those who wished to deny us the growing democracy and individual freedom, who wished to sell us out to European Catholicism, and he demonstrated he had no wish for self-aggrandisement. Compare this to the likes of Mandleson, Blair and so on, whose sole interest is self and who are in such a hurry to deny us our democracy and ancient freedoms that they give away rather than even sell out to the fourth reich in Brussels”

“Really? That's how you whitewash Britain's first and, hopefully, last military dictator?”

“Yes, I think he was the greatest Englishman. To quote further from his short speech to MPs when ending the Long Parliament: “Gold is your God; which of you have not bartered your conscience for bribes?” Nothing has changed. Look at the rabble infesting Parliament now. If only we had an Oliver Cromwell today”

From these quotations is obvious that the current political situation is making Cromwell popular again and his deeds are seen from another point of view with certain topicality. Based on those comments I dare to say that in case of any serious political crisis would Cromwell's acts – the deposing of the king and dissolution of parliament became very popular and more people would think that "This Country needs another Cromwell".

### **Posthumous honours**

The restoration of the monarchy was connected with rejecting of Oliver Cromwell and it took almost hundred years until the appearance of Cromwell's honours.

Probably the first Cromwell honour after the restoration was American battleship "Oliver Cromwell", built in 1776, being "the largest full-rigged ship constructed for the State under the general direction of the Governor and Council of Safety". The ship served in the American Revolutionary War for three years during which it captured nine British ships (Middlebrook, 1925). American did another great honour to him; a Connecticut town which was settled in 1650 as the Upper Houses of Middletown was in 1851 renamed to Cromwell. At present the town still holds the name Cromwell (Cromwell, Connecticut, 2011).

Situation in Britain was more complicated; Cromwell received his first "post-restoration" honours two hundred years after his death when his statues began to be erected.

One of the first statues of Oliver Cromwell is in Bredford. Here is Cromwell, together with 34 monarchs from the Norman Conquest up to Queen Victoria, decorating the City Hall. The sandstone statues are arranged in chronological order; Cromwell stands between Charles I and Charles II. Cromwell's statue is present despite the fact he was never a king; on the contrary, he became well-known for deposing the king. Richard Cromwell is not included, although he reigned under the same title as his father. Erecting the Cromwell statue just in Bredford has its historical reason. During the civil war was Bratford loyal to the parliament and successfully repelled royalist attack three times. Nevertheless, it was a controversial act to build his statue, because "his inclusion in 1873 caused so much controversy at the time that Irish labourers working on Bradford's landmark building refused to hoist him up to his second-floor perch. They were still bitter about the massacres of their countrymen by Cromwell's armies - even though it was then 274 years since his death" (An 'Oliver' twist to the royal line-up, 2001). Although opinions about Cromwell are full of contradiction, John Goldsmith, Museums Officer for Cambridgeshire County Council explains why were Bratford councillors among the first who publicly expressed their positive attitude towards Cromwell: "The strong dissenting tradition of the area, and the growing stature of Cromwell as a Protestant hero, makes the figure's appearance logical and expected" (Ibid.). He added:

Both contemporaries and, later, historians have held starkly different opinions about Cromwell. For many he was an arch-hypocrite, an ambitious tyrant who ruthlessly



used and destroyed individuals and institutions in pursuit of personal power and glory ...Others have seen him as a tolerant and enlightened figure who genuinely believed he was doing God's will". (Ibid.)

Another advocate of Cromwell's statue is Jonathan Taylor, of the English Civil War Society, who claims: "It's totally appropriate for his statue to be placed among kings and queens. He ruled the country for years as the Lord Protector ... People might class him as a baddie but he certainly was effective and for the period he ruled the country peace was restored and people grew in wealth" (Ibid.).

Yet other towns encountered the displeasure of their inhabitants when erecting Cromwell statue. Another example is from Manchester, where in 1875 local Liberal politicians erected Cromwell statue which was a gift to the city. The statue depicts Cromwell in battledress, body armour and drawn sword. The statue again did not meet univocal acceptance because "when it went up, it annoyed the city's large Irish immigrant population as Cromwell had ruthlessly put down Irish uprisings. And when Queen Victoria was asked to open Manchester's town hall she allegedly insisted that the statue of Cromwell should be removed". Despite the queen's demand, the statue remained which caused the Town hall being opened by the Lord Mayor instead of the queen. Again, Manchester was on the parliamentary side during the civil war, suffering from royalist sieges. Because Manchester was an important base of the parliament "In 1656 ... the parliamentary mace was given by Cromwell to the town as a mark of gratitude or its support, and was brought to Manchester" (Manchester and the English Civil War, 2012). The statue was placed outside the cathedral where it stood until 1980s when, due to reconstruction, it was moved into Wythenshawe Park where Cromwell's army used to have their camp. Now the city of Manchester is planning to build a Medieval Quarter a place for commemorative monuments, including a Cromwell statue (Cromwell's new stand: Plan for statue to move to Manchester's new 'Medieval quarter', 2011).

Undoubtedly, the most famous statue is that in Westminster with Cromwell holding a sword and a Bible. The idea of erecting Cromwell's statue at British parliament at Westminster began in 1890s. Initially, the intended sculptor was John Bell, who exhibited a Cromwell statue at Crystal Palace in 1862, but he died in 1895, before the plan reached its conclusion. Finally, Hamo Thornycroft was chosen as the sculptor. As always, problems occurred (Oliver Cromwell statue, 2007). "The governing Liberal Party strongly supported the proposal in the hope of consolidating the nonconforming Protestant vote, but the bitter opposition of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster forced the withdrawal of a

motion seeking funds from the House of Commons” (Cromwell’s statue in Westminster, 2009). In spite of no public finances, Lord Rosebery oneself financed the statue which was unveiled in 1899, 300 years after Cromwell’s birth. The statue itself aroused negative reaction not only in Irish, but also in English, as is recorded in a letter of the Earl of Hardwicke: “It was only when the pedestal on which the Cromwell statue now stands reared itself into view that anyone realised the intention of Her Majesty's Government, and petitions came in from all parts of the country. I have a list in my hand of 274 petitions which, I believe, have been presented to Her Majesty's Government protesting against the erection of this statue” (The Cromwell Statue, 1900).

In addition to the statues in the 20<sup>th</sup> century several machines were named after Cromwell. During World War II, were in British army deployed Cromwell tanks from the series of cruiser-tanks. Their first action was the Battle of Normandy in 1944. The only civil machine named after Cromwell is the steam locomotive Oliver Cromwell, a British Railways standard class 7, built in 1951 and in service until 1968 (Locomotive Association, 2007).

## CONCLUSION

Cromwell's life was controversial and so is his legacy. He was object of divided opinions of both historians and common people for hundred years. Many of those opinions are contradictory, ranging from hero, pioneer of democracy and religious visionary to villain misusing his military power to seek his own profit. The fact that Cromwell, although more than 350 years dead, is still being discussed is a good reason to study him. It is not a straightforward subject and during the study I have encountered various prejudices.

I have focused mostly on the civil war because it played a key role in shaping Cromwell's future. His political power derived from his military position and also his religious as well as political views were interconnected with his military career. Also, he was probably the most important person in the civil war and played a key role in all decisive battles. His deeds in the civil war earned him respect as well as hostility and nowadays those deeds are still widely discussed. Nevertheless, even those who are biased against Cromwell do not doubt his military skills. In addition, Cromwell was one the key figures who brought about significant changes in a political as well as religious sphere.

The last years of his life Cromwell spent as a head of state, but not a king like many of his predecessors, but as a Lord Protector, ruler of a republic, which was a form of government absolutely new to the 17<sup>th</sup> century England. Another feature of that state was contradictory religious freedom which on the one hand allowed various branches of Protestantism but on the other hand strongly suppressed Catholicism.

Opinions about Cromwell developed during the time; firstly he was banished and regarded as a tyrant and almost personified evil which was a vindictive act of the restored monarchy but gradually, as new information appeared, he became regarded also as a good person. No one can doubt Cromwell's importance as a historical figure. It is necessary to have the proper information in order to reach one's own conclusion and not to judge deeds according to rumours or information that are not soundly based - which is regular problem when studying Cromwell.

Even more than 350 years after his death much can still be learned from Cromwell, studying his life gives overview political, religious and social situation of his era as well as information about 17<sup>th</sup> century warfare. Especially Cromwell's attitude towards the parliament is even nowadays worth thinking about.

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## SUMMARY IN CZECH

Tématem mé bakalářské práce je život a odkaz Olivera Cromwella, jedné z nejkontroverznějších postav Britské a Anglické historie. Práce je rozdělena do dvou vzájemně propojených částí.

V první části své práce se snažím popsat Cromwellův život a určit nejdůležitější okamžiky, které utvářely jeho osobnost a posmrtný odkaz. Největší pozornost je věnována občanské válce, která měla na Cromwellovu osobnost i jeho odkaz zásadní vliv. Náhled na tento problém je založen na studiu historických děl současných autorů. Druhá část práce zkoumá, jak je Cromwell vnímán v současnosti. Jako materiál pro tento výzkum posloužily různé články a internetové diskuze.